

REMARKS

Applicants will prepare and file formal drawings upon allowance of this application.

Applicants submit herewith a substitute Abstract to replace that which was objected to in the Office Action.

Applicants have amended the claims to remove the reference characters and to remove the objection based on informalities and indefiniteness, and Claims 3 and 9 have been amended to remove the objection thereto under 37 C.F.R. 1.75(c). The claims are now believed to be definite.

Amendments to the specification have been made and a Substitute Specification is enclosed, along with a marked-up copy. The Substitute Specification also includes the proposed amendments. No new matter is involved.

Claim 7, indicated as allowable, has been canceled and rewritten as new Claim 13. Claim 10, indicated as allowable has been rewritten as new Claim 14 and Claims 11 and 12 amended to depend from new Claim 14. Claims 11-14 are believed to be in condition for allowance.

Claim 2 has been canceled and the contents thereof incorporated into Claim 1. Claim 1, as now amended, is to a substrate cleaning system that includes a sealable system body, a loading/unloading booth comprising a substrate carry-in section in which a plurality of substrates are stocked and standby to be carried in before a cleaning treatment is applied to them and a substrate carry-out section in which a plurality of substrates are stocked and standby to be carried out after the cleaning treatment was applied to them. A processing booth is provided with at least one sheet-type substrate cleaning chamber in which a cleaning treatment can be applied to a plurality of substrates by a plurality of cleaning solutions, and a robot booth is provided with a transport robot for

transporting the substrates one by one between the processing booth and the loading/unloading booth. The respective booths are partitioned by partition walls with the loading/unloading booth and the robot booth respectively installed on opposite sides of the system body. The robot booth is sandwiched between the loading/unloading booth and the processing booth, and the loading/unloading booth has openings which are openable to an operating space provided outside the system body. Such a system is not taught or suggested in the cited references.

Claims 1, 2, 6 and 8 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as anticipated by EP 982098 (Ebara) and Claim 4 has been rejected as obvious in view of a combination of Ebara and Iwai et al. (U.S. 5,829,939). Reconsideration and removal of the rejection of Applicants' claims (2 have been canceled) are respectfully requested in view of the present amendments to the claims and the following remarks.

In the Office Action, it is alleged that Ebara teaches all the features of Applicants' rejected claims, including a housing with a booth separated by walls, with a loading/unloading booth, carry-in section and carry-out section, a processing booth, and a robot for transferring substrates and a reversing unit.

A review of Ebara, however, shows that that reference does not show or suggest the arrangement of amended Claim 1 wherein a robot booth and a loading/unloading booth are installed on opposite sides of the system body and the robot booth is sandwiched between the loading/unloading booth and the processing booth, with the benefits provided thereby.

As now amended, Claim 1 provides that "the loading/unloading booth and the robot booth are respectively installed on opposite sides of the system body; the robot booth is sandwiched

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between the loading/unloading booth and the processing booth; and the loading/unloading booth has openings which are openable to an operating space provided outside the system body.” Such an arrangement is not taught or suggested by Ebara, and the secondary reference, Iwai et al., also does not teach or suggest such an arrangement.

In view of the present amendment to the claims and the above remarks, Applicants’ Claims 1, 3-6, 8 and 9 are believed to be patentable in addition to Claim 13 (Claim 7 rewritten) and Claim 14 (Claim 10 rewritten) with Claims 11 and 12 dependent thereon, and early allowance thereof is respectfully requested.

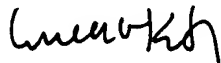
If, for any reason, it is felt that this application is not now in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact Applicants undersigned attorney at the telephone number indicated below to arrange for an interview to expedite the disposition of this case.

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In the event that this paper is not timely filed, Applicants respectfully petition for an appropriate extension of time. Please charge any fees for such an extension of time and any other fees which may be due with respect to this paper, to Deposit Account No. 01-2340.

Respectfully submitted,

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PATENT TRADEMARK OFFICE

Enclosure: Substitute Abstract
 Substitute Specification (with marked-up version)

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